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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between the power of English school heads and the participation of teachers in school decision-making. Specific objectives of the study were 1) to determine the type and extent of teacher participation in school decision-making, 2) to examine the relationship between teacher status within the school and frequency of teacher participation in decision-making, and 3) to analyze any differences between present and desired decision-making participation by teachers. Data were gathered from questionnaires completed by school personnel from a sample of nine schools in northwest England. The author's analysis indicated that school heads have tended to retain control of both physical and human resources, at the same time as there has been a development toward participative management. (JG)

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POWER AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING  
IN SELECTED ENGLISH SCHOOLS

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# POWER AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING IN

## SELECTED ENGLISH SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

James A. Conway

Ever since the now classic studies by Coch and French<sup>2</sup> on overcoming worker resistance to change there has been an increasing emphasis placed on the participation of workers in certain areas of management decision making. Such participation has been primarily noted in the industrial and business domains throughout the world but only recently is it evident in schools.<sup>3</sup> In England, Sharma documented that while teachers reported some participation occurring as early as 1963 these same teachers indicated that considerably greater participation was desired.<sup>4</sup>

In 1967 the Plowden Report urged more consultation between heads and assistant teachers at the primary level<sup>5</sup> while the Donnison Report in 1970 urged similar practices at the secondary level.<sup>6</sup> Despite this official urging from Government and the business-industrial movement toward participation as a desired mode of behaviour, Musgrove in 1971 still saw fit to characterize headmasters as "petty despots."<sup>7</sup> One of his strongest conclusions was:

Teachers, then would like more say in the way schools are run. This is true of both secondary and primary teachers; but the latter see the head as wielding more power and would be prepared to have more in his hands.<sup>8</sup>

This view of the English head as a powerful figure is underscored by Easthope in his view in 1975 of the English head as a "sovereign head."<sup>9</sup> Easthope's conclusion is that "the power exercised by the head in an English school is formidable, and the head can be compared to the sovereign of a

state whose powers are limited only by the willingness of his subjects to obey his commands but whose right to give commands is not disputed by his subjects."<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to this view of "sovereign power" is the view expressed by George Baron in a paper prepared for the Newsletter of the University Council of Educational Administration in 1974. Drawing upon the narrative of a few heads of schools as indicative of his perspective Baron states: "The distinctive English acceptance of the headmaster as 'captain of his ship' has been long under challenge and various forms of participatory leadership have developed."<sup>11</sup> Still further indication of the significance of participatory decision making in the emerging leadership of schools is found through the Open University's Management in Education Units.<sup>12</sup>

It is around this difference in thought that the present study was formulated. That is, what is a reasonably accurate characterization of the English headmaster - petty despot or participatory leader? Is it likely that the type of leader that Musgrove depicts would support participation of teachers in the fundamental decision areas of the schools? Studies in both America and Ireland have indicated that participation appears to be a norm or at the very least an evolving norm.<sup>13</sup> Is this also the case for England and perhaps the fundamental support for Baron's observation? If in fact such is the case, that is that participation is a norm as identified by teachers and masters, then a subsequent question is whether or not such participation is being conducted as the Donnison Report urges, "with due regard for seniority and the primacy of the headmaster."<sup>14</sup>

More precisely, the purposes of this study were:

1. to establish the type and extent of participation in decision making in a cross section of English schools;
2. to consider status levels of teachers within the hierarchy of the school as an indicator of power and the relationship to the school decision making; and
3. to analyze the differences between present and desired participation by teachers to ascertain if a pattern of involvement by area is evident with implications for understanding the apparent dilemma of sovereign heads and participatory leadership.

#### SOME CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

##### Participation

As was indicated earlier, participation has had much emphasis since the 1948 studies of Coch and French. Likert gave the concept central focus in his New Patterns of Management (1961) while Tannenbaum, Sharma, Bridges, Alutto-Belasco, and Conway continued development and refinement of the concept.<sup>15</sup> One of the more important distinctions that has been made is the effects of "objective" participation versus "subjective" participation.

The notion of objective participation is that an outside observer can identify actions and events that the observer contends indicate the type and level of participatory decision making that is operating in the organization. Thus, for example, Tannenbaum and Schmidt identify a hierarchy of participatory behaviors that they associate with leadership. They have constructed a continuum from "task oriented leader" to "relationship oriented" that essentially includes the following hierarchically arranged

examples of participatory decision making behavior that an observer might believe he is seeing:<sup>16</sup>

1. Leader makes decision and announces it.
2. Leader "sells" decision.
3. Leader presents the idea(s) for the decision then invites question to clarify.
4. Leader proposes tentative decision which is subject to group modification.
5. Leader indicates precipitating problem, gets alternatives from group then selects and alters for a decision.
6. Leader defines the limits for the decision and requests a decision within these limits from the group.
7. Leader permits subordinates to function in a decision making capacity within the limits mutually defined by superior and group.

This approach to identifying participation obviates the individual effects of the participation. We lose the results such behaviour elicits among those acting in the system. Thus, at level six above, an individual might feel that (s)he was being used or manipulated by the leader. That is, the participation was objectively real, but subjectively false.

The framework employed in this study was individual-subjective where each subject or participant identified whether or not participation was occurring for that participant, followed by a grouping of perceptions to attain an estimate for the school. For some persons, if the head should merely pass them in the hall and ask their opinion, they might feel that they have had substantial input to the decision outcome, that is that they

have genuinely participated. This might be contrary to what the outside observer sees but, nevertheless, the participation is psychologically real in that the effects are felt by the individual.

For this first part of this study the question to be answered was:

Q<sub>1</sub>: Is participation in decision making perceived as occurring in all schools in the sample; that is, is participation a norm for the cross-sectional sample of English schools?

### Power, Status and Participation

While power is a term that is not consistently defined, it is generally recognized as a concept closely related to authority and influence.<sup>17</sup> Both power and authority are forms of influence. Authority is the right a manager has to make decisions and expect compliance. Power is the force that backs up the authority. Much managerial power is in the form of control over "things such as pay, promotions, employment, termination, and so on."<sup>18</sup> Thus the potential for compliance is likely to increase as the availability of sanctions through resources increases.

Empirically Smith and Sandler found that in certain schools power was a significant contributor to the status of individuals in the school hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> But it also seems logical that the relationship would work both ways, that is that those possessing status by virtue of position in the organizational hierarchy would be key elements in a communication hierarchy and therefore in a position of power.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, it would seem likely that the administrative head would confer more frequently with those individuals within the organization who have the power to influence others.<sup>21</sup> Thus, assuming, as it seems reasonable to do, that the greater an individual's social power the higher the status, we could predict that

there would be a direct and positive relationship between the level or intensity of an individual's perceived participation in school decisions and the status level of that individual in the school.

On the other hand, Conway found that in selected schools in Ireland the relationship between status and participation, while positive and direct, was only a weak association ( $r = .16$  for  $n = 55$ ). He offered as a possible explanation that the positions in the school hierarchy in that country may best be viewed as indicators of "ascribed status" which may not be congruent with the social power or "achieved status."<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, while Smith and Sandler indicated that perceived competence was a major determinant of status<sup>23</sup> they were apparently referring to achieved status. So too was Homans when he indicated that once a person has achieved status that such may then contribute to his ability to exert influence over others.<sup>24</sup> Thus it would seem logical to conclude that perhaps status positions in Ireland were assigned on the basis of criteria other than competence. Since this may well be the situation in any school organization or any country, a research question was posed to direct this phase of the study:

- Q<sub>2</sub>: Is the status level of English teachers positively associated with their self perceived frequency of participation in school decisions?

#### Participation Patterns and Headmaster Power

The third purpose of this study was to ascertain insights about any discrepancies noted between teachers' desires for participation and their present perceived participation in the school decision areas, followed by some speculation concerning the implications for the power position of the English head. By looking at the discrepancy scores for each area of

decision making for each of the schools in the sample, it should be possible to determine which decision areas tend to be reserved to the decision making of the head. Of particular interest is the extent to which the areas of "staff appointment" and "staff timetabling" are shared with the relevant school personnel.

Blau and Schoenherr contend that in more modern organizations the area of recruitment of employees is a "crucial responsibility and a major mechanism of control."<sup>25</sup> They argue that an organization can recruit most anyone then rule with an iron fist, or the organization can be staffed with specialists or experts which then diminishes the need for tight-fisted control. They go on to indicate, however, that the allocation of personnel, which is in essence what timetabling is about, is the "ultimate mechanism of organisational control . . . in the sense that reliance primarily on it is the polar opposite of Weberian bureaucratic control through a chain of command backed with coercive sanctions."<sup>26</sup>

The third question, then, is a general direction of concern to guide the analysis:

- Q<sub>3</sub>: What are the patterns of involvement in the English schools sampled and what do they contribute to an understanding of headmaster power or control?

## PROCEDURES

### Instruments

The primary instrument employed was an adaptation by Conway<sup>27</sup> of a Decisional Condition Questionnaire developed by Alutto and Belasco in 1972.<sup>28</sup> The adapted version contained the following eleven areas within which teachers could identify their involvement in decision making:

1. Appointment of new staff
2. Preparation of school or department budgets
3. Textbook selection for department or school
4. Resolution of pupil academic or personal problems
5. Construction of individual teaching timetables
6. Resolution of staff grievances
7. Adoption of new teaching methods
8. Decisions about new building facilities
9. Resolution of problems involving community groups (as parent or citizen groups)
10. Resolution of problems with administrative services (as clerks, typists, etc.)
11. Decisions concerning general teaching policy

For each of the eleven decision areas a question was stated in the following format: (in this example for decision area #1)

- a. When a new faculty member is hired in your school or department, would you be involved in making such a decision?

Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Always\_\_\_\_\_

- b. Do you want to be involved in making such decisions?

Never\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes\_\_\_\_\_ Often\_\_\_\_\_ Always\_\_\_\_\_

This adapted version of the questionnaire allowed for several participation measures. By counting only the "a" portions of responses an estimate of the present level of participation that that teacher perceives may be computed. Viewing the difference between the "b" (desired) and "a" (present) provides a measure of how satisfied the teacher is with his or her involvement in decision making.<sup>29</sup>

With each questionnaire the respondent was asked to indicate their position in the school hierarchy as:

1. Deputy
2. Department Head
3. Graded Post (a position of responsibility as Director of Games, etc.)
4. Teacher or assistant master/mistress
5. Other (with a request to specify their title)

### Sample and Subjects

A sample of nine schools was selected to approximate a cross section of schools in the northwest of England. The following criteria were employed in making the selection: a) size, such that medium to very large schools were represented; b) location, that the schools were within reasonable access from Manchester; and c) representativeness of school types, that is that there were comprehensive, grammar and secondary modern schools included. It is recognized that since the schools were not drawn in a random fashion that extreme care must be taken in interpretation of data and in drawing generalizations. On the other hand the schools that finally participated (see Table 1) seem to be reasonably representative of the types of schools that are in evidence in that segment of England. All of the schools had good returns of the questionnaires except schools numbered 2 and 6. The low returns only take on importance when considering the school by school patterns which are discussed later.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Within the schools the head was interviewed and permission was requested to administer the adapted Decision Condition Questionnaire to the teaching staff. If permission was granted, as it was in 8 of the 9 schools, then the head was asked to distribute the questionnaires to a random sample of the staff. The returns of the teaching staff when viewed against their position in the school (see Table 2) would tend to indicate that the upper levels of the status hierarchy may well be more heavily represented.

TABLE 1

Schools, Staff Size and Percentage of Returns

School Code Number *	Type of School	Staff Size		Percentage of Returns **
		Fulltime	Parttime	
1	Urban Infant	10	5	70%
7	Suburban Infant	6	7	83
2	Urban Comprehensive	68	29	17
3	Urban Secondary Modern	43	5	40
4	Suburban Girls Grammar	43	26	77
6	Suburban Boys Grammar	43	12	27
8	Suburban Comprehensive	54	20	70
9	Urban Split-Site Comprehensive	91	18	70
5	Suburban Compre- hensive	94	7	***

\* Code numbers were assigned as a school was visited and, therefore, indicate a sequence of visitation.

\*\* Computed on the basis of a random distribution of thirty questionnaires to full-time staff.

\*\*\* School number 5 was omitted as the head would not give permission to administer the teacher participation questionnaire.

TABLE 2

Distribution of Respondents  
Among Status Levels

Status Level	Assigned Score	Number Indicating this Status
Deputy Head	4	8
Department Head	3	39
Graded Post	2	35
Teacher or Assistant Master/Mistress	1	21
Total Number of Respondents		103

RESULTS

The findings of this study will be presented to parallel the purposes stated earlier. First to be reported will be the descriptive outcomes, followed by the test of the research question of status versus participation, and finally the visual examination of participatory patterns for insights as to power and control of heads of schools.

### Extent and Type of Participation

The average intensity of participation for each of the eight schools ranged from "sometimes involved" to "often involved." In only one decision area in one school was there a case where no teaching staff saw themselves involved in the decision. That school was Infant school #1 and the area where no one perceived any inputs concerned new building facilities. In general, then, it seems reasonable to respond to the first question with a positive response, that is that some form of participation in decision making seems to be evident in all of the school types sampled. Participation is definitely the rule rather than the exception for this cross section of English schools.

Each of the eleven decision areas is considered next with a brief description of the finding and a possible interpretation.

1. Participation in staff appointments: This item was tied for eighth lowest in terms of present participation. While both infant and secondary staffs indicated that some participation was evident, they went on to indicate that this was the second highest area of deprivation. That is, they generally desired considerably more input in this decision area than they were presently experiencing. Burgess has indicated that staff have traditionally had no input in the appointment of a new head.<sup>30</sup> It appears that this is also the case with respect to the appointment of new staff.
2. Participation in budget preparation: The participation for both infant and secondary staffs seemed reasonably high in this area. There was still, on the average, a considerably higher desired involvement (ranking fourth) although not as large a deviation as in the first decision area.

3. Participation in textbook selection: Textbook selection showed the least deviation from the desired level of participation and was also the highest for present level of involvement. In general, teachers indicated that they participated with high frequency in selecting texts and this was the amount of participation that they wanted. This was somewhat surprising since, in some communities in America, the selection of textbooks by teachers has been challenged by community people resulting in conflicts between administration and teaching characterized as infringements on academic freedom.<sup>31</sup>

The data for the English schools could mean that teachers regularly come together for selecting texts and thus all parties have input and, with that input an increased opportunity for coordination and articulation from one level to another. However, it would seem that if that were the case there would be more teachers expressing some discontent or discrepancy as such a process would require some teachers "giving in" or submitting to group demands thus leading to a somewhat higher state of dissatisfaction. Therefore, the more likely interpretation of the data is that English teachers enjoy relatively high autonomy in textbook selection. That condition may lead to the censorship-academic freedom conflict mentioned above.

4. Participation in resolving pupil problems: Both infant and secondary staffs indicated high involvement in this area at present (3rd highest) and also indicated a desire to maintain that level of involvement. This appears to be a very healthy picture and a very professional one. It would seem to indicate an acceptance on the part of staff of their responsibility for "pastoral care" or the guidance function.

5. Participation in constructing teaching timetables: Timetable construction was anticipated as one of the more sensitive areas. One headmaster commented that he constructed the timetables and he was not about to lose that area of "power." This decision area fell about in the middle for present involvement. While there was a considerable discrepancy between the present level and the desired level of involvement (3rd greatest deviation), it was still not as high as the above comment might have led us to anticipate.

6. Participation in resolving staff grievances: This was one of the two decision areas where some degree of saturation was evident. Saturation occurs when persons are involved in decisions to an extent greater than desired.<sup>32</sup> In one of the infant schools teachers indicated that they would prefer less participation than they presently experience in the resolution of grievances. In all other schools the members of staff indicated that they presently enjoy about as much input as they want. It may well be that the staff realize that the difficulties of helping adults resolve problems are not necessarily rewarding and, though willing to help, assistant masters do not desire high involvement in this sensitive administrative area.

7. Participation in adopting new teaching methods: Teaching method selection is the one other area where some saturation was noted. In the suburban infant school the teachers indicated that they would appreciate somewhat less participation than at present. This was an open-spaced primary where, perhaps, the novelty and experimental nature of the school was now assuming a greater proportion of staff time than they felt it should. For the other infant school and the secondary schools the level

of participation was quite high (ranking number 2) and the desired involvement only slightly higher.

8. Participation in decisions about building facilities: While this is the number one concern area (greatest deviation), it may be that the concern was escalated by the number of teachers responding from schools badly in need of repair. This was also the only area where an entire staff indicated that they presently have no participation at all and desire a very high level of involvement. It appears that those responsible for planning and refurbishing school buildings might well consider involving teaching staffs so that their teaching needs can be identified and met through the building structures.

9. Participation in eliminating community group problems: The English teachers responding in this study indicate that they were neither highly involved in resolving community problems nor did they desire such involvement. This seems to be an "urban" attitude of non-involvement with community and might be contrasted if data were collected from some rural or semi-rural schools. The results might also indicate a disregard for the recommendations made in the Plowden Report that there should be more participation by parents in their children's education.<sup>33</sup>

10. Participation in resolving problems with administrative services: It may be that this is a continuation of area 6 (resolving staff grievance) for neither infant nor secondary members of staff expressed a desire for high involvement. Nor did they perceive themselves as substantially involved now. If this is associated with area 6, it would follow that the staffs do not see involvement with adult problems as their domain. Again, perhaps by default, this seems to be viewed as the responsibility of the school administrators.

11. Participation in general policy decisions: In both infant and secondary schools the present perceived involvement was, surprisingly, right at mid-point; that is, it was neither high nor low for either the present or desired conditions. The teachers see themselves reasonably involved now, desire somewhat more but do not want total participation in all policy decisions.

#### Teacher Status and Participation

The second question that directed this study asked if the status level of English teachers was associated with their self perceived frequency of participation in school decisions? The status level of each respondent was assigned a number from 1 to 4 in accordance with the level that they assigned to themselves. An assistant master or mistress (teacher) was assigned the number one; two was given to those individuals who indicated they had a graded post position (such as "games master" or "communication coordinator" and the like); all department heads or house masters were assigned a three; and four was set for the deputy head. Some consideration was given to a differential assignment of numbers based upon the "status" of the school as Easthope indicated for his study of school hierarchies;<sup>34</sup> but the concern in the present study was not the status position of the individual in a community of scholars or the society but rather the hierarchical or social power position within the school.

The correlation of the 103 members of staff was  $r = .544$ , significant at .001 even for a two-tailed test of significance. Thus, with a high degree of assurance, we can assert that the higher persons are in the status hierarchy of the school the more they find themselves involved in the school related decision making.

### Patterns of Participation

The third purpose of the study was to examine or determine whether there were patterns of participation that were discernable and further, if such could provide insights for understanding headmaster power. The results relative to pattern are reported here while the discussion and implications for headmaster power are reserved for the next session.

The mean level of desired and present participation were computed for the participating schools. When the differences between the present and desired levels were examined together with the present levels of participation, there appeared to emerge three distinct clusters. These clusters are shown below in Table 3.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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The first cluster is made up of those decision areas where the teaching staff on the average see themselves highly involved and further, that that level of involvement is consistent with their desired intensity of participation. The decision areas in the cluster are those directly related to the process or act of teaching where classroom decisions and teacher inputs would be a sine qua non. In the second cluster are areas that the staff have not found themselves involved to any extent nor do they appear to wish for much higher involvement. An examination of these decision areas shows them to be all associated with adult problems, indirectly affecting the teaching-learning process and, apparently areas that teachers would prefer to remain in the domain of the administration. Or, to have staff participate only as necessary or as invited to do so. The third cluster contains the decision areas

TABLE 3

Decision Areas, Present and Desired Teacher Participation and  
Participation Differences

Decision Areas	Present Participation	Desired Participation	Degree of Difference of Desired vs Present
Textbook Selection	high	high	small
Pupil Problems	high	high	small
Teaching Methods	high	high	small
General School Policy	mid-high	mid-high	small
Staff Grievances	low	low	small
Community Problems	low	low	small
Admin. Staff Problems	low	low	small
Appointment of Staff	low	high	large
Building Plans	low	mid-high	large
Budget Preparation	mid-high	high	medium
Teaching Timetables	middle	mid-high	medium

of "staff appointment," "building plans," "budget preparation," and "teaching timetable preparation." Here are found fairly substantial differences between present and desired levels of involvement and, as the areas are examined, they appear to be those where personnel selection, allocation, and physical resources are involved. The cluster appears to be composed of areas useful for reward or punishment.

In an attempt to further refine patterns the individual school scores for level of participation as well as the discrepancy measures for each school were computed and are reported in Table 4. To read the table the first school will be examined. School Number 9, which is the largest secondary school, had an average participation level of 2.33 for Textbook Selection. Since the range for participation is from 0 to 3 it can be seen that the 2.33 is a very high participation score. The high participation of teachers in that decision area for School #9 is further clarified by viewing the 2.33 against the average for all of the secondary schools (fourth column from the right hand side of the table). Since the average for all of the secondary schools is 2.46 it is now possible to interpret the score of School 9 as high but lower than the average participation level. Inspecting further it is evident that all of the scores in the first cluster for School #9 are reasonably high but still lower than average. The second cluster scores are quite low indicating that there is not very much participation by staff in two of the three decision areas. It should also be noted that there are no asterisks for the first two clusters indicating that the teachers, for all of these decision areas, were reasonably satisfied with their level of input.

The last cluster is the one where asterisks are found most frequently for all of the schools. For School 9 the teachers indicate fairly low level of involvement for "appointment of staff" and building inputs and these are two areas where these same teachers feel very highly deprived, that is they would prefer a much higher level of involvement. With respect to budget and timetables they see themselves somewhat more involved but would still prefer a higher level of involvement.

Now in looking across the schools it appears that the two major areas of teacher dissatisfaction with their decision making participation are for teaching timetable preparation (five of the six secondary

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Insert Table 4 about here

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schools indicated high or very high deprivation) and for appointment of staff (four of the six schools showed deprivation scores). There were too few primary schools to discern a pattern but it is interesting to note that in the two included here the greatest deprivation, on the average, was found in the decision areas relating to budget and building facilities. The implication of these and the other results reported above will be discussed in the next section.

#### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As the results were reported in three sections so too will they be presented for discussion. The first of these sections deals mainly with the descriptive data and responds to the question of whether or not participation is a norm for the schools.

TABLE 4

Decision Areas, Intensity of Present Participation and  
Participation Differences by Schools

Decision Areas	Secondary Schools Arranged from Largest to Smallest							Primary		AVG.
	#9	#2 <sup>b</sup>	#8	#4	#6 <sup>b</sup>	#3	AVG.	#7	#1	
Text Select	2.33 <sup>a</sup>	2.00	2.33	2.70	2.75	2.67	2.46	1.60	2.42	2.01
Pupil Probs	1.95	1.60	1.91	2.00	1.75	2.17	1.90	2.20	2.71	2.46
Teaching Meth	1.86	2.00	2.24	2.17	2.38	1.92	2.01	2.40	2.29	2.35
Gen Sch Policy	1.38	1.80	1.48	1.74	1.50	1.67	1.60	1.80	2.14	1.97
Staff Griev	1.90	1.60	1.10	1.35	1.13	1.17	1.38	1.40	1.58	1.49
Community Prob	.71	.80*	1.00	.74	.75	.75	.79	1.00	1.29	1.15
Ad. Staff Prob	.67	.20	.57	.39	.75	.33*	.49	.40	.40	.40
Appt of Staff	.86**	1.40*	1.43*	1.35	1.75	.67**	1.24*	.80	.42**	.61*
Bldg Plans	.95**	1.20	1.00	.78**	1.38	.83**	1.02*	1.00	.00**	.50**
Budg. Prep	1.43*	1.20	1.71*	1.48	2.25	2.08	1.69	1.40	.42**	.91**
Tch Timetables	1.29*	1.60*	1.38*	1.82*	1.60	1.25**	1.49*	1.60	2.71	2.23

\*A single asterisk indicates the staff in the school felt highly deprived in their participation in this decision area

\*\*A double asterisk indicates the staff in the school felt very highly deprived in their participation in this decision area

<sup>a</sup>The participation score has a potential range of 0 to 3.

<sup>b</sup>These two schools had returns lower than 40% and consequently must be interpreted with caution.

### Participation in English Schools

The results indicated that all schools had at least minimal participation in all of the decision areas. This tends to support Baron's observation of an evolving participative leadership in schools in England.<sup>35</sup> This does not necessarily rule out the contention of Musgrove that the heads are essentially "petty despots," but the results do indicate a sharing of power and a wide distribution of involvement. But what of the quality of involvement?

Musgrove has said that if schools are to be considered "potent" then ". . . more teachers must be able to take final decisions, or have a genuine voice in such decisions which relate to the circumstances in which they work."<sup>36</sup> The data from this study indicate that teachers perceive themselves significantly involved in a variety of decision areas. Do the data indicate teachers being able to take final action? to make final decisions? No, but Musgrove's alternative would ask then if their input is, indeed, genuine. As indicated earlier the notion of "real" or "genuine" input must be viewed from the perspective of the individual experiencing the participation and, therefore, the data would seem to support an interpretation of genuine or real involvement.

It should be noted again that the sample of schools was deliberate rather than random and thus generalizations should be treated as hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis confirming. Nevertheless, even with a deliberately selected cross-sectional sample, to find participation in all schools where entry was permitted, in all types of schools and of all sizes, in both urban and suburban locations, is noteworthy. At the very least we can suggest that participation is possible with even the largest

of schools, contrary to the expectation that some promote that largeness and dehumanization are necessary correlates.

At a conceptual level the findings lend credibility to the view that participatory management is to be expected rather than suspected in school organizations. Miller has indicated that proponents of "Theory Y or non-authoritarian administration" . . . firmly believe that organisational decision making will evolve in this direction. . ."<sup>37</sup> Indeed if the system perspective is adopted wherein the organization is seen as akin to a living organism, then it becomes obvious that a certain level of participation is a sine qua non for organismic existence. Cannon's concept of homeostasis might be considered as a form of decentralized decision making where certain bodily functions are not exercised by the cerebral cortex but by lower levels of the decider system.<sup>38</sup>

#### Teacher Status and Participation

The result reported of a correlation of .544 between the status of the staff in the school and their intensity or level of participation is what might be expected in a system where worker relationships are of a personal nature and where there is high discretion in the superior's application or enforcement of system rules. Gibson indicates that this particular system relationship, which he labels "permissive personalism," tends to encourage conforming behavior which in turn promotes an image of trustworthiness and thus enhances the individual's level in the system.<sup>39</sup> It would also seem to follow that the higher the status position in the school hierarchy the more these persons are perceived as holding social power. That is, these persons are seen as competent to influence a

change in the system and they are, consequently, persons to be consulted with in making decisions. If true, this would indicate that more than length of service was used for promotion in the system, at least for these included in the study. Furthermore, conversation with heads of schools tended to support competence as a criterion for promotion. Some heads indicated that they would frequently reserve graded post allocations so that they could use these posts when they wanted to retain a particularly competent teacher.

In contrast to this use of power for rewarding competence it is useful to recall that in Ireland, length of service has been employed as almost a single criterion for promotion to posts of responsibility. In the schools of that country it was found in a similar study that the relationship between status and participation of teachers was only .16.<sup>40</sup> Such single-criterion-systems, where heads are either denied the power to reward and retain members of staff or also choose not to exercise such powers, may find the results dysfunctional in the longer course of time. It is certainly more advantageous for the head to know whom to consult with and expect that that individual will be not only competent but also hold influence in the system. This may be an example where the exercise of the heads' power in a reasonable fashion contributes to a cohesive end, especially as the power is shared within the system.

#### Patterns and Power

If any generalization can be made from the data generated in this study it may be that teachers in secondary schools see the head retaining most control in the area of allocation and selection of human resources (appointments of staff and preparation of teaching timetables);

while in the primary schools the control seems more in the physical resource areas of budgets and buildings. It may well be that the "small group" atmosphere of the primary school facilitates teacher-head interactions and creates feeling of intimacy but, this may also force the head to maintain some visible vestige of power through the control of physical resources. This speculation is well beyond the data, however, for the infant schools were neither consistent nor of sufficient number to do more than speculate.

But there were sufficient secondary schools to see that management focused on control of human resources. But why this area for control? Is it that these schools are being administered from a modern management position as indicated by Blau and Schoenherr rather than the Weberian posture of bureaucratic control?<sup>41</sup> If so, then a highly developed training scheme for heads might be expected when in fact formal management training seems to be a relatively recent phenomena in the English system. Is it perhaps an indication of a philosophy of "Theory X", management, that people need to be controlled and directed, manipulated as things?<sup>42</sup> If so this might support both Musgrove and Easthope in the view of the head as a sovereign, petty despot who uses participation for control.<sup>43</sup> Or are the data indicative of a stage of organizational evolution where the last remnants of power are being retained by heads? Or at the evolutionary stage where heads are trying to create a participative climate at the same time as they seek ways to "exercise control without overriding the professional autonomy of teaching staff"?<sup>44</sup> While the data do not permit a single explanation, we can state that the school heads have clearly retained control over that form of sanctions that does most to increase their power and so increase the likelihood of subordinate compliance.

A FINAL NOTE

In summary it seems evident that heads in the English schools in the northwest have tended to retain control of both physical and human resources at the same time as there has been a development toward participative management. Members of staff perceive themselves sharing in the power, participating in decisions in relation to the position of the staff member in the power-status hierarchy of the school. However, while this study indicates that participation is a reality in the schools, it is important to recall that the manifestations or format of participation are self-defined. The teachers made the decision as to whether or not they were or were not sharing in the decision areas. Thus, while they have indicated that they are presently reasonably satisfied with their intensity of involvement, as they continue to participate and taste the fruits of power, it is likely that their demands for more visible, formal, or frequent participation will intensify. If that assumption holds, that is, that a taste of power increases the desire for more, then it would seem prudent that heads be prepared to facilitate the increased desires of involvement or suffer the cynicism and suspicions of staff with all of the consequences for learning and learners.

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